

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00096 180719Z
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
CIAE-00 SP-02 L-01 DODE-00 ACDA-07 PRS-01 /054 W
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R 180655Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2850
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0096

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR MARR MOPS MPOL IR MU
SUBJECT: THINNING DOWN OF IRANIAN CONTINGENT IN OMAN

REF: (A) LONDON 305, (B) TEHRAN 247, (C) LONDON 681

1. IN BRIEFING DCM JAN 17, COL. JOHN QUINN, SAF OPERATIONS
CHIEF, CONFIRMED THAT IRANIAN BRIGADE IN DHOFAR IS REDUCING ITS STRENGTH.
THIS IS BEING DONE AS PART OF REGULAR ROTATION OF BRIGADE, WHICH
OCCURS EVERY FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS. UNITS REPLACING THOSE NOW
BEING ROTATED OUT WILL BE CONSIDERABLY THINNED IN MANPOWER. ALTHOUGH
PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY, SAF HEADQUARTERS DOES NOT YET KNOW WHAT
FINAL STRENGTH OF NEW BRIGADE WILL BE. IT HAS VARIED BETWEEN 2,500
AND 3,000 MEN IN THE PAST.

2. QUINN BELIEVED THAT REDUCTION MAKES SENSE, GIVEN VIRTUAL
ABSENCE OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN DHOFAR. IRANIAN ROLE NOW
REDUCED TO OCCUPATION OF TERRITORY. MOREOVER, SUBSTANTIAL
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IRANIAN AIRLIFT CAPABILITY WOULD PERMIT RAPID REINFORCEMENT
FROM IRAN SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.

3. OMANIS MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY PLEASED WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT.
UNDERSECRETARY OF OMANGOV FOREIGN MINISTRY, YUSUF AL ALAWI,
TOLD DCM JAN 15 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY
REDUCTION IN IRANIAN FORCES OTHER THAN WHAT HE TERMED "NORMAL

ROTATIONS" THAT MIGHT RESULT IN SLIGHTLY LOWER MANPOWER STRENGTH.
HE WAS CERTAIN THAT ANY SYSTEMATIC WITHDRAWAL WOULD OCCUR ONLY
AFTER IRANIAN CONSULTATIONS WITH SULTAN, WHICH HE SAID HAD NOT
TAKEN PLACE. WHILE CONCEPT OF "NORMAL ROTATIONS" IS CONSISTENT
WITH QUINN'S BRIEFING, AL ALAWI CLEARLY WISHED DOWNPLAY WHAT
APPEARS TO BE A SIZEABLE REDUCTION OF FORCES.
WOLLE

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